

Inspection of Tithe Barn Primary School

Mauldeth Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 3NG

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at this time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), genuinely enjoy belonging to this small and nurturing school. They show high levels of care towards each other. Pupils welcome people of different faiths, cultures and disabilities. They work and play together in harmony.

Pupils, including children in the early years, are happy and they feel safe. They know that staff are there to help them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils share warm and respectful relationships with staff and with their peers.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement and for their behaviour. The majority of pupils achieve highly and they are well prepared for key stage 3. Pupils also behave sensibly and they engage well in their learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. They contribute to decision-making in the school through their roles as school councillors, eco-warriors and play leaders. One recent example was pupils' considerable involvement in the redesign of the school playground.

Pupils particularly enjoy going on trips and residentials to Ironbridge and to York. Through these meaningful learning experiences, pupils enhance their knowledge and understanding of important places.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has constructed an aspirational and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those pupils with SEND. The school's bespoke curriculum has been appropriately developed to help pupils to learn about the local area and life in modern Britain.

In the main, the curriculum is well designed and it enriches pupils' learning across subjects. In most subjects, the key knowledge that pupils will learn from the early years to the end of Year 6 has been clearly identified. However, in a small number of subjects, there is too much content for some pupils to remember. This hinders how well some pupils learn and recall important information.

Staff are provided with regular training to develop their knowledge and skills of how to teach different subjects. As a result, staff are confident in delivering the curriculum across a range of subjects. Staff in the early years are equally skilled. Typically, staff have secure subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum.

Within lessons, teachers are adept at addressing pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings, for example through their questioning techniques. In many subjects, leaders have designed appropriate systems to check that pupils have retained important knowledge over time. However, in some subjects, the school is in the process of refining its assessment systems. In these subjects, leaders'

assessment systems sometimes do not give teachers all the information that they require about how well pupils have secured earlier learning. This prevents a few pupils from achieving all that they could.

The school has implemented an effective early reading curriculum. Pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they start at the school. Reading is at the forefront of the school's curriculum. Many topics begin with a book as the inspiration for new learning.

The youngest children begin to develop a love of reading through the vast array of books, stories and rhymes that staff share with them. Staff are alert to any pupil who may not be keeping up with the phonics programme. They intervene quickly so that pupils receive effective and timely support. Struggling readers read books which are well matched to their current understanding of phonics. This helps them to gain confidence and to read with increasing fluency.

The oldest pupils value their school library. They appreciate the diverse range of books on offer to them. Pupils are keen to take responsibility for selecting new books to go on display in this space. Most pupils, by the time that they leave Year 6, have developed into proficient readers.

The school is a haven of inclusivity. Staff skilfully identify pupils' additional needs and make suitable adaptations to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff successfully work in partnership with outside agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND get the help that they need. Staff and pupils delight in learning sign language to be able to communicate with those pupils in school who have complex communication needs.

The school ensures that vulnerable families receive the support and help that they need. In the main, staff support pupils to attend school regularly. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they understand what it means to be a good friend and how to keep themselves safe when online.

Governors know the school well. They offer support and challenge to all aspects of the school, with a particular focus on the quality of education. Staff work well as a team. They appreciate that their workload and well-being are considered by the school before any changes to policy and procedures are brought in. For example, leaders consulted staff on the assessment system.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, there is too much curriculum content for pupils to know and remember. This means that some pupils may not develop the depth of understanding that they should about essential concepts. It may prevent some pupils from building a rich body of knowledge over time. Leaders should define the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn across the curriculum. This is so that pupils have a sufficiently secure foundation on which to build new learning.
- In a few subjects, assessment systems are underdeveloped. This hinders how well some teachers check that pupils have retained earlier learning. The school should finalise its systems to assess pupils' learning in these remaining subjects. This is so that pupils have secure foundations on which to build new learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106080
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10242358
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Trudy McLindon
Headteacher	Katherine Muncaster
Website	www.tithebarnschool.com
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2009

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders and pupils. Inspectors also reviewed samples of pupils' work in these curriculum areas.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also examined the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Morris

Ofsted Inspector

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